United Nations A/56/L.50

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
11 December 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 20 (d)
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana, India, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Yugoslavia: draft resolution

Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 49/139 of 20 December 1994, 50/19 of 28 November 1995, 52/171 of 16 December 1997 and 54/98 of 8 December 1999,

Reaffirming also its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 47/168 of 22 December 1992, 48/57 of 14 December 1993, 49/139 A and B of 20 December 1994, 50/57 of 12 December 1995 and 51/194 of 17 December 1996 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 of 28 July 1995 and 1996/33 of 25 July 1996,

Recognizing that recent events emphasize the need for the international community, in addressing the growing magnitude and complexity of natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies, to rely not only on the formulation of a well-coordinated global response within the framework of the United Nations but also on the promotion of a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development,

01-68848 (E) 111201

Recalling that prevention, preparedness and contingency planning for emergencies at a global level depend, for the most part, on the strengthened local and national response capacities as well as on the availability of financial resources, both domestic and international,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General,[1] prepared in pursuance of its resolution 54/98 on the participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development;

2. *Encourages* voluntary national and regional actions aimed at making available to the United Nations system, through the United Nations Volunteers and other agencies, national volunteer corps such as the White Helmets on a standby basis, in accordance with accepted United Nations procedures and practices, in order to provide specialized human and technical resources for emergency relief and rehabilitation;

3. *Expresses its appreciation* for the commendable progress of the White Helmets initiative as a singular voluntary international effort to provide the United Nations system with voluntary expertise to respond, in a quick and coordinated manner, to humanitarian relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, while preserving the non-political, neutral and impartial character of humanitarian action;

4. *Recognizes* that the White Helmets, in close cooperation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and as an operational partner of the United Nations system, are an efficient and viable mechanism for making pre-identified and trained homogeneous teams available to the United Nations, in support of immediate relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development activities, in the light of the increasing number, growing magnitude and complexity of natural disasters and other emergencies;

5. *Calls upon* Member States to promote the facilitation of cooperative actions between the United Nations system and the civil society, through national volunteer corps, in order to strengthen the United Nations capacities for early and effective response to humanitarian emergencies, and invites them to make the commensurate financial resources available through the special financing window of the Special Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Volunteers, or in coordination with it;

6. *Encourages* Member States to identify and support their respective national focal points for the White Helmets in order to continue to provide the United Nations system with an accessible global network of rapid response facilities in case of humanitarian emergencies;

7. *Recognizes with appreciation* the progress made by the States members of the Common Market of the South and associated partners in the strengthening and broadening of the White Helmet humanitarian assistance concept within a regional framework, and encourages Member States in other regional associations to consider implementing that concept in their efforts aimed at extending humanitarian assistance cooperation;

[1] A/56/308.

8. *Invites* Member States, international financial institutions, regional organizations and the United Nations system to consider ways and means to ensure the integration of the White Helmets initiative into their programme activities, particularly those related to humanitarian and disaster relief assistance;

9. *Invites* the Secretary-General, on the basis of the experience acquired, to consider further the potential use of White Helmets as a source for preventing and mitigating the effects of emergencies and post-conflict humanitarian emergencies and, in this context, to maintain an adequate structure for the White Helmets liaison functions, taking into account the outgoing reforms process;

10. *Recommends* that the Secretary-General encourage relevant agencies of the United Nations system to explore opportunities for collaboration with White Helmets, taking into account the success of coordinated actions carried out, inter alia, with the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Volunteers;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue the consideration of the possible strengthening and broadening of consultative mechanisms to promote further and operationalize the concept, as referred to in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the present resolution, and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, under the item entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", on the actions taken in conformity with the present resolution.